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know me?" She fastened on him her

luminous brown eyes, with red lips parted, awaiting the clearing up of this

Wilfred preserved a solemn counte-

nance. "T've been awfully lonesome, Lahoma, the last two years, because

up to that time I'd lived in a city

world. If I tell you all about myself,

Wilfred promised, and Lahoma en-

Wilfred looked and listened joyously,

to the subtle charm of her fearless

he saw already the promise of the wo-

but the faint sweet fragrance was al-

CHAPTER VIII.

sleep in. There are two rooms in the

cabin-one, the kitchen, where we eat,

lor," Lahoma said somewhat wistfully.

"I'd like to show you all my books.

They were Bill's when we first met

him, but since then he's given me everything he's got, haven't you, old

Bill?" Lahoma leaned over and patted

She resumed, her face glowing with

sudden rapture: "There are six books-

half a dozen! Maybe you've heard of

some of them. Bill's read 'em over

lots of times. He begins with the first

on the shelf, and when he's through

the row he flust takes 'em up all over

again. I like to read parts of them-

the interesting parts. This is the way

"The Scottish Chiefs," 'David Copper-

field, 'The Talisman,' 'The Prairie,'

fred prompted her, "and the men took

"Yes, and then-oh! The most won-

derful thing happened. A family set-

tled in the arm of the mountain at the west end-a family that had a woman

and a baby in it. For three years I

had the mother and her baby to show

me how to be a woman. Then came

the soldiers. Brick thinks a big cattle

king stood in with congress, and he got

the soldiers sent here to drive out all

the settlers because they were begin-

it grow wild for the cattle. Anyway

all the settlers were driven out of the

country, and it's been four years since

I lost my only friends in the world-

except Brick and Bill. What makes

me and Brick and Bill mad is that the

out the settlers, because Texas claims

this country, and so does the United

But they didn't drive you out."
"You see," Brick explained simply,

"It nearly broke Mrs. Featherby's

heart to have to leave." Lahoma added.

"for they'd got a good stand of wheat,

and I think she liked me 'most as well

as I liked her. But Mr. Featherby

came from Ohio, and he had respect to

the government, so when the soldiers

"We ain't got no respect to nothing,"

Brick explained, "that stands in the

way of doing what we're a mind to.

The soldiers come to force us out, but

changed their minds. We will stay

here at anchor till Lahoma steams out

into the big world with sails spread.

Nothing ain't more sheltering than

knowing you have a moral right and a

"So that's about all," Lahoma went

on. "These past four years we've just

been to ourselves, with a long journey

I've tried to do like Mrs. Featherby

used to do and be like she was. She'd

been to Europe, too, and she'd taught

school in New England. She was like

you-right out of the big world. She

came out here because the family was

once a year to the settlements.

said 'go' he : ...lled up stakes."

States, but it's never been settled."

"we didn't want to go."

dependable gun."

ning to farm the land instead of letting

"And so your cabin was built," Wil-

"The Last of the Mohicans."

the dugout."

the unyielding shoulder.

under a roof."

The Half Opened Bud.

will you do the same?"

(Continued.)

tablet that I'd like to know aboutquestions that come to me as I sit "Yes: just so. But such thoughts looking over the hill into the sky. tavels powerful fast. Don't take 'em things Brick doesn't know and not ong to lap over a thousand mile." even Bill Atkins. So that's why I'm "But it's because she is a young glad to know you," Lahoma said irl, fresh and unartificial as the gravely. "But why did you want to

countain breeze, that I want to be fith her for a little while-yes, get to now her, if I may."

Willock turned to the taciturn old an standing a little behind him. Bill Atkins, what do you say?" ... "I say fire him, and do it quick!" was

he instant rejoinder, accompanied by breatening twitchings of the huge Willock was not convinced. "Son. I you sets here till we have had our breakfast and has held a caucus over jou I'll bring you the verdict in about in hour. If you don't like that they's

"I go on duty at 7," replied the forms man composedly, "but I have a briefly riding the line that il stay with I till I come. So I'll wait for your

tothing to do but put out for your

"That friend-one of them devils I that at the other day?" Whifred Compton smiled with sud-

lea synniness. "Yes." Demewhere beneath the immense whisters an answering smile slipped like a breeze, stirring the iron gray bair. "I kinder believe in you, som Nebody can't gains ... that yon've played the man in this matter. Now, just one thing more. You must swear here before me, with Bill Atkins for an unwilling witness, that should we let you make the acquaintance of our little gal and should you get to be friends, you two, that the very fust minute it comes to you that she min't no little gal, but is in the way of being food for love-Bill Atkins, air l

making myself plain?"
"You min't," returned the old man sourly. "You're too complicated for ordinary use."

"Then you tell him what I mean." The old man glared at Wilfred flerce "If we decide to grant your re quest, young man, swear on your henor that the second you find yourself thinking of our little girl as a woman, to be woodd and wen, you'll put our and never stop till foure so, far away you'll be clerr out of her world. And not one word to her, not so much as one hint, mind you, as to the reason of your going. It'll just be goodby and

"You see," Willock Interpolated, "she ds nothing but a little gal, and we don't want no foolish ideas to the contrary. You takes her for what she'ls nothshe'll be growed up some day, I reckon, though may the good Lord take a good long time finishing up the work be's begun so noble. When she's growed up, when she's a woman, it alu't for us to say how you come and thow you go, take from or add to. But while she's a kid it is different, ac-

"You have my word of honor to all these conditions," Wilfred cried lightly. "As a child of the mountains I ask for her acquaintance. If I should ever feel differently about her I'll go away and stay away until ahe's a woman, The two men went into the cabin An hour later they reappeared, accom-

panied by the girl. Wilfred was still sented obediently on the rock. "Come over here in the shade." Willock called as he strode toward a grassy bank that sloped up to a line of three cedar trees of interlocked branches. /'Come over here and know

her. This is our gal." Lahoma looked at the young man with grave interest as he advanced. taking note of his garments and move ments as she might have examined the skin and actions of some unknown animal. Bill Atkins also watched him.

but with suspirious eye. "Set down." said Willock, sinking on the grass. "The last man up is the blugest fool in Texas,"

Lahoma and Willfred instantly dropped as if shot, at the same time breaking into laughter that caused Willock's beard to quiver sympathetically. Bill Atkins, sour and unrecponsive, stood as stiffly erect as possible aided no lit-tle in this obstinate attitude by the natural unclasticity of age.

The young man exclaimed boyishly. still smiling at the girl, "We're friends already because we've laughed to-

gether. "Yes," cried Lahoma, "and Brick is in it too. That's best of all." "I nin't in it!" cried Bill Atkins so

fercely that the young man was somewhat discomposed. "Now, Bill," exclaimed the girl re-

provingly, "sit right down and make the move." "This is Miss Lahoma Willock."

growled Bill, "and this"-waving at the oung man disparagingly-"says he is Wilfred Compton. . Know each other!" "I am glad to know you." Lahoma declared frankly. "It's mighty lucky you came this way, for, you see, I just five here in the cove and never touch the big world. I believe you know a we ain't never dreamed of."

"That we have never dreamed of? corrected Bill Atkins.

"That we have never dreamed of." resumed Lahoma meekly, "and that's what I would like to hear about. I'm just a little girl now, but when I am of age I'm going out into the big world so that's why I'm so glad to know you. to use you like a kind of dictionary. Are you coming back here again?" .

awful poor. Is that why you left the big world?" "I hope so!" he exclaimed fervently. Wilfred shook his head. "I'm po "And so do I. In my cabin I have a enough," he said, "but it wasn't that. song list of things written down in my It was a girl."

Brick Willock explained: "He's got a sweetheart. He's been carrying her letters for about two years. He's done spoke for, Lahoma, staked out, as a fellow night say, and squatted

Lahoma looked at him in breathless Sterest. "A girl out in the big world? Completely civilized, I reckon! Was she as old as I am?"

"She is nineteen years old and so thoroughly civilized that she thinks this part of the world is still overrun with Indians and buffaloes. She wouldn't live out here for a fortune, and she wouldn't marry a man back east without one. That's why I'm here. I didn't have the fortune."

"Does she love you, Wilfred?" Her voice was so soft, her eyes were so big, that Bill uttered a smotheredgroan, and even Brick sat up.

"She did the last time I saw her." He spoke lightly; but, gazing into the wonderful depths of Lahoma's eyes, he felt a queer sensation like a lost heart beat.

"Did she send you here as a kind of test?"

"Oh, no; she told me good by, and we parted forever. Both of us were poor. You can't live in the city if you're poor. You can be poor there, but not live. By this time she's found some one with property, I dare say. She's tremendously handsome and accomplished and has a very distinguish-



ed looking mother, and they have friends in society. She'll make it all right, no doubt."

and the other, my parlor, where I deep. Some time you shall visit me in the cabin if Brick and Bill are willing. They made it for me, so I couldn't ask anybody in unless they said so." "Dees it plerce your heart to think of her marrying somebody else?" Her "We aren't far enough along," obvoice was sweet with the dream passion of a young girl.
"When I left home I flung myself served Bill, "to be shut up together "I'd like to have you visit my par-

into the life of a cow puncher and did all I could to keep from thinking. Sc my heart's rather callous by this time. I don't seem to mind like I thought I would if I should sit down to think about it. That's what I've avoided like the plague-sitting down to think about it. But I believe I could sit down and think about it now pretty calmly.

"Then that's what I'd do!" Lahoma "I'd just face it. She isn't worthy of you if she'd rather have a fortune than the man she loves. I'd

just sit down and face it." "I will!" He had never before thought it could be easy. It seemed

very easy now. they stand on the shelf: 'The Children "Maybe I could help you," Lahoma suggested earnestly. "If you come to the cove to visit us we will try to ocof the Abbey'-that's Bill's favorite; cupy your mind, won't we, Brick-and

Bill looked at Wilfred glumly, "It's too occupied now, I'm afraid."

claimed, "but I couldn't force myself where I'm not wanted."

"In that case," remarked Bill inflexfbly, "you're seeing me for the last time and may look your fill!"

Wilfred smiled at him tolerantly and turned to Willock. "I ought to go to my work, Brick. I won't try to explain what this hour has meant to me, for I believe you understand." soffliers didn't have any right to drive

He held out his hand to Lahoma, who had risen swiftly at these signs of departure. "God bless you, little girl!" he said cheerly. "A man's fortunate who finds such oases along his desert

"But you can't go yet," cried Laho-ma, not taking his hand. "There are a thousand things I want to do with you that I've never had a chance to do with anybody else-strolling, for instance. Come and stroll. I'll show you about the cove. Brick and Bill don't know anything about strolling as they do in pictures. Hold out your arm with a crook in it and I'll slip my hand just inside where you'll hold it soft and warm like a bird in its nest. BRIDGEPORT & PORT JEFFERSON STEAMBOAT CO. STEAMBOAT CO. To medicine; am recommerding it excuse me-I hold back my skirts with my other hand, and this is the way we stroll, like an engraying out of the history of Louis XIV's court. Do, oh, do!" Her bright eyes glowed into his

like beckoning stars. "We stroll," he gravely announced, responding to the pressure of her fingers, but at the same time feeling somewhat guilty as Bill rolled his eyes fearfully at Brick.

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"Bill," wied Brick warningly, "you're a-going to start a fire where they ain't even been no kindling laid."

Wilfred rose hastily. "I should like dearly to come and come often," he ex-

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